

Message Text

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S E C R E T MOSCOW 17174

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, US, UR, IS

SUBJECT: SOVIET JEWRY AND THE EMIGRATION ISSUE

REF: MOSCOW 17157

1. AS NOTED REFTTEL, SOVIET JEWS INTERESTED IN EMIGRATING (AS WELL AS U.S. GROUPS SUPPORTING THEM) CONSIDER THAT A COMMITMENT WAS MADE ON THE SOVIET SIDE TO EASE JEWISH EMIGRATION AND ELIMINATE HARASSMENT. FURTHERMORE, THEY VIEW THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AS THEIR PROTECTORS IN THIS REGARD.

2. THESE JEWISH DISSIDENTS HAVE LEARNED THAT THROUGH PUBLICITY IN THE WESTERN PRESS, OR CONTACT WITH IMPORTANT FOREIGNERS, THEY CAN IN EFFECT PROTECT THEMSELVES. SAKHAROV, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD SENATOR BUCKLEY THAT THOSE ACTIVISTS WHO HAD SEEN SENATOR KENNEDY LAST SPRING HAD NOT BEEN BOTHERED BY THE AUTHORITIES SINCE THAT TIME. WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF SUCH CASES AS PANOV, ZALMANSON, AND EVEN KUDIRKA IN MIND, THEY WILL SEE EVEN GREATER VALUE IN GAINING PUBLICITY FOR THEIR PROBLEMS. WE WOULD EXPECT THAT THOSE JEWS WHO ARE REFUSED EXIT ON "SECURITY GROUNDS" WILL BE ANXIOUS TO SHOW THAT THEY ARE BEING HARASSED BY THE AUTHORITIES IN VIOLATION OF THE "AGREEMENT" AND WILL GO TO THE WESTERN PRESS WITH THEIR COMPLAINTS.

3. JEWISH CONTACTS AND WESTERN JOURNALISTS HAVE ALREADY REPEATEDLY QUERIED US ABOUT THE "VERIFICATION PROCESS." WE EXPECT THAT UNLESS THE SOVIETS MAKE SOME DRAMATIC ABOUT-

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FACE IN THEIR EMIGRATION PROCEDURES, WHICH WE CONSIDER UNLIKELY,

THE EMBASSY WILL BE APPROACHED INCREASINGLY WITH ALLEGATIONS OF HARASSMENT.

4. IN THE CASE OF SOVIET JEWS AND OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS WHO ARE CONSIDERED U.S. CASES, I.E., THOSE SOVIET CITIZENS WHO HAVE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN THE U.S. AND WHO HAVE APPLIED FOR EXIT TO THE U.S., OUR DIRECT INTEREST IS CLEAR AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT FOR ACTION. FOR THOSE JEWS WHO HAVE APPLIED FOR EMIGRATION ELSEWHERE, HOWEVER, WE ARE IN A MUCH MORE AMBIGUOUS POSITION.

5. ALTHOUGH WE WILL DO OUR BEST NOT TO BE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE BETWEEN THE JEWISH EMIGRANTS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS ON THE ONE SIDE, AND THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES ON THE OTHER, WE WILL ALMOST UNQUESTIONABLY BE FACED IN THE MONTHS AHEAD WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF "OFFICIAL PROTESTS" ABOUT HARASSMENTS OF JEWS BY THE AUTHORITIES.
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